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E. L. YODER, } Associate Editors.
E. MASON, }

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ASHLAND, O., Dec. 7, 1887.

The Pharisees.

Who were the Pharisees? They were not a sect, they were a brotherhood, a kind of religious order, in contradistinction to the Sadducees. They had the support of the mass of the people. They had risen at the time of the Maccabees for Israel and for Israel's God about 160 B. C. They split from the Maccabees when the latter became worldly, and formed a brotherhood about a century before Jesus Christ was born into the world.

It was a question of tithes that brought them into prominence. They formed themselves into a body and determined not to buy or to sell anything that had not first paid tithe. The question of purification or cleansing, as interpreted by the Levitical law, even down to pots and pans, was the second half of the Pharisaic creed.

All this separated them from the people, even though it was their regard, and though they were only six thousand in number when Jesus stamped them as a class with the name of "hypocrites." They had the virtual control of the religious world of Judea at that day. You might have known them anywhere by the careful adjustment of their blue praying cloaks as they prayed, hiding their head within the drapery till all was blue, because blue was the color of the heavens, the throne of God.

It is the Sabbath day; there is a knot in this shoestring. If the Pharisee can untie it with one hand, well; if it requires two it must be left untied, or the Pharisee will break the Sabbath. The man with a load on his own shoulder may, on the Sabbath day carry it; if he share the burden with another he will be breaking the Sabbath. A Pharisee has a friend who is starving; it is the Sabbath; let him not take a loaf in his own hands to his friend's need through the streets, or he will profane the Sabbath; let him get a lad to hold the other end of the loaf as he carries it, and all will be well. Two thousand cubits from home was a Sabbath day's journey. The Pharisee wanted to walk to a place beyond. He will the night previous, take a loaf and put it on the ground. Where a man's loaf is, that is considered his home, and so on the Sabbath he will walk to his loaf and thence begin a Sabbath day's journey.

It is absurd to see how this spirit of hypocrisy is still kept up. In some of the Jewish cities, wires like telegraph wires are laid across the ends of the streets. The Scribe and Pharisee of to-day do as the Scribe and Pharisee of Christ's day. Visiting was forbidden on the Sabbath, but a wire stretched across the street ends would make the whole street one house. So one could go to and fro in the streets, believing one was still keeping the Sabbath law, because one was staying at home. This was hypocrisy, and all this was done with an easy conscience.

The Pharisee is a blind guide—he cannot see the light because his own great important self holds it in eclipse, and if he looks upon his fellows, he always sees them as so many black patches against the light which he considers shines for himself alone.

Let us beware of self-righteousness. Are there Pharisees today? Do we lay out a particular routine of stereotyped duties and forms, and then unchristianize all who will not conform? Then beware, we are treading on dangerous ground.

A preacher had striven to set forth Christ's life before the people. "Oh," said a critic, "its all very well, but it isn't the Gospel. He never mentioned the word Jesus but once in his sermon throughout.,' That man worshipped the letter. The word "Jesus" had been a kind of phylactery or charm, without which he distrusted all the Christianity in the world.

We have heard love feasts condemned because soup or some other prescribed article of food was not on the table. Then in that case the soup or meat or something else becomes the phylactery.

We have known sisters condemned because a special head dress was not worn on a special occasion; and men have been condemned because a peculiarly cut garb was not donned. Are not these phylacteries that cast a dark shadow over the light of Christianity?

The Lord never condemned phylacteries. According to Numbers 15: 37-39 we find that the Lord commanded the Jews to wear a riband of blue. It was only when this phylactery eclipsed the teachings of Jehovah and covered a sinful heart that it was condemned. Thus the very institutions of the Lord may be used to cover sin and evil.

M.

Religion on a Scientific Basis.

There a is blasphemous journal published in Chicago called the "Open Court," which proposes to establish ethics and religion upon a scientific basis. It is next to needless to say that such a proposition will be considered absurd by every enlightened mind. Where is there any scientific basis for ethics—the science of duty? This science has been established upon a divine basis. It was established there when God handed to Moses the tables of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, and there it will remain until the end of time. This establishing was supported by the gospel of Jesus Christ, which shall not pass away. More enduring than the eternal rocks it is; and it is presumption of the most impudent kind to talk about establishing ethics and religion upon a scientific basis, while a code of each is before us whose purity can not be questioned, and both founded upon a divine basis. Who can show any impurity or coarseness about the life of Christ and the gospel which is a delineation of his character and life. Such purity can no where else be found, and religion and ethics can be founded upon nothing more beautiful, higher or grander.

Men have been basing ethics and religion upon a scientific basis ever since the spread of Christianity and the more basing that is done the less establishing is accomplished. A religion that rests upon scientific principles would be the most unsatisfactory religion that could be conceived. It would not be equal to heathen idolatry as a source of consolation to the heart. To be satisfactory, religion must be founded upon belief. Hard facts and figures have nothing spiritual in them; they are too much an actual to feed and satisfy the longing for the spiritual. It is the *belief* that actuates men to perform service that is religious. The benighted heathen who makes his body a victim of all sorts of wild gestures and wounds his flesh with sharp instruments amidst shouts and groans endures it all because a belief prompts him. The idea of suffering is inherent in the human soul, and it is not satisfied until it is performed. The Christian would not and could not be satisfied without it. But Christ "suffered for us." Glorious comfort and heart consolation. Our suffering was borne by our Lord and we go free. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

A religion and a code of ethics founded upon a scientific basis could go no deeper and rise no higher than the flesh does. It would be confined within the boundaries of the human, and there could be nothing divine or spiritual about it. God is a spirit, and the religion that he has given the world through Christ has a spiritual basis, and those who accept it are spiritual in their religious natures, instead of scientific.

It is time worse than wasted to speculate upon a thing so impracticable as seeking a basis for religion or even ethics in science, because it is not there, and no one but infidels will seek to find it there, and their wisdom is foolishness with God.

The world and revelation can find nothing more satisfying to the soul, more grand and beautiful, than an implicit confidence in the promises of God and a belief in the atoning blood of Jesus.

G.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.

Some one has written us as to the history of this important document that so surprized the religious world a few years ago. The facts are these:

In 1873 there was discovered at Constantinople by Archbishop Bryennios the earliest book of the Christian Church extant. The volume in which it was found contained seven treatises. It was a little volume, seven by five inches in size, of one hundred and twenty pages of much stained vellum. Its writer had finished copying it in the year 1052. His name was Leo, the Lion; but though he was doubtless lion-hearted in the faith, he had by the Gospel message been convinced of sin; for he signed himself. "Notary and sinner."

In the midst of the one hundred and twenty pages were found ten more precious than the rest. These were a copy of the earliest Christian book extant. It is called "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." It is a manual of church teaching that is confidently believed to belong to the first century, written perhaps within living memory of those who had been taught by disciples of our Lord and Master himself, and earlier certainly than some part of our received book of Scripture.

The doctrine of trine immersion is plainly taught here. Those who practice sprinkling and pouring have a less authority for their views in this book. As pouring and sprinkling is only to be practiced when it is impossible to do the former. Trine immersion is the preference according to the "Teaching." And even pouring and sprinkling is to be performed three times—once in the name of each person of the Trinity.

M.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

We have placed at the head of the editorial columns this week instructions where money for the College should be paid. Any brother who has money for the College should read it and act accordingly.

The Evangelical Alliance opens a conference in Washington City today, Wednesday, Dec. 7th.

The doctrine of a Future Probation does not fare very well among the Congregational ministers of the New England States. Recently the Observer sent letters of inquiry to the churches, and out of 501 replies 459 express emphatic opposition to the hypothesis.

Atlanta, the Southern city, in which prohibition was in force during the past two years has gone "wet" through the votes of ignorant negroes. The city itself did not give a majority for prohibition two years ago, but 300 against it. The county in that election gave a majority of 500 for prohibition. This makes five defeats that prohibition has sustained this year. But the principal is true and will yet prevail.

The Board of Trustees of Ashland College held a meeting on the 29th, and took steps to pay off the Cleveland mortgage on the College. It is their purpose to do it without placing any encumberance on the property. Brethren can find no better place to invest their money than to loan to the College and to pay off that claim some must be borrowed. Do not forget this brethren, you who have money to loan, and favor the College.

The forthcoming *Year Book* of the United Brethren in Christ will show that at present that denomination has 4,396 churches, an increase of 64; 1,566 itinerant preachers; membership 195,278, a gain of 10,175. With a membership as large as this, a great work ought to be done in the Lord's cause.

At the foot of the mountain Eggishorn, on the southern slope of the Jungfrau in the canton of Wallis, Switzerland, Lake Merjelen is located. Last year the people intended to drain off its water and use the dry land for agricultural purposes. One night a shock of earthquake was felt in Wallis, and the next morning the waters of the lake had disappeared and the inhabitants may now partition out the ground given them. God often helps those who are willing to help themselves.

The late convention did some wise things and some unwise; but among the peculiar things is the articles of Incorporation of the Brethren Church. We are somewhat amused to notice that only five men constitute the incorporated Brethren Church. As soon as they get a constitution and by-laws and terms of membership specified, we may apply for membership therein.

Pennsylvania will lose one of its most successful revivalists when Bro. DeBolt moves to Nebraska, and the Carleton brethren are quite fortunate in their choice.

Darwin's theory about the reef-building corals which has stood for fifty years unassailed has lately been proven to be wholly false. Thus one ofter another of the monuments built by philosophers crumble and fall. No wonder a holy man said the "foundation of the Lord standeth sure," while he looked upon the ruins of doctrines and theories around him.

A lease of 999 years, made in the days of King Alfred, has just expired in England. The land was leased by the Church to the Crown, and reverts now to the Church of England after a millennium of years—a striking illustration of the stability of the law in that little isle.

Recently a priest in Pittsburg, Pa., renounced the Roman Catholic faith, and was baptized by single immersion in the Baptist church. Among his reasons for leaving the Roman church were: The gross ignorance of the priests and the demoralization wrought by the confessional, which he declares takes away from the heart the fear of God and the love of God and encourages the confessed penitent to go on in sin. He declares that the confessional injures both the penitent and the confessor by taking away all sense of shame."

A new theory about a state of probation after death has been promulgated, which has something in it that commends it to men's sense of justice, which cannot be said of the old.

It believes in preaching the Gospel to the righteous dead, while the sinners are abandoned. If men in "the spirit" are to be judged as men in the flesh by the Gospel of Christ, the righteous dead should have an opportunity of hearing and obeying the Gospel. These would have obeyed the Word had it been preached to them in life. But if the wicked have an opportunity of returning to grace through preaching to the dead after they leave the world, then it is useless to spend time to serve God now. The time thus used can be devoted to other pursuits. But this would be an exceedingly dangerous venture. Today is the accepted time, says the Word of God.

A Kansas paper thus approaches a delicate subject we wish to speak about: "There i$ a little matter that $ome of our ubcriber$ have $eemingly forgotten entirely. To u$ it i$ a very important matter—it'$ nece$$ary in our bu$ine$$. We are very mode$t and don't like to $peak about it."

The commission appointed by the last general conference of the United Brethren church to revise the confession of faith and constitution has submitted its draft. The confession of faith contains thirteen articles. This the New Testament excels in every respect as a confession of faith. But the constitution, which relates principally to the workings of the general conference is advisable and will have a beneficial influence,

Under the title of "Alarming Drift," the New York Independent says:

"There is a popular saying among non-christian men to this effect: 'Religion is all well enough for the women and children; but it is hardly to be expected that thoughtful business and professional men should give other attention to it than to support the churches for the benefit of the weaker portion of the community who are still held by their prejudices and religious superstitions.' This, in substance, is what was recently said to the writer during a conversation in which the fact that fewer men than women were to be seen in the ordinary Sunday congregations of the churches was under discussion. How far this conviction or belief is shared by the mass of intelligent non-church-going men we are not in a position to know; but it is certain that there is a drift among men away from the church."

Every one must admit that the statements made in the extract are correct. Men are becoming less and less devoted in their attendance at church. If women, as a rule, were no more devoted to religion than the men are, the country would be in a deplorable religious condition.

A brother apologizes for sending an article for the paper. We would politely inform our friends and brethren, that all good articles will be accepted without apology.